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TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
Town Hall, 15 Oakmont Drive
Ashburnham, Massachusetts 01430

Office of the Ashburnham Planning Board

December 14, 2007

Linda Ramsdell, Town Clerk
Ashburnham Town Hall
15 Oakmont Drive
Ashburnham, MA 01430

GFA Federal Credit Union Site Plan Review (SPR 2007-08)

At a duly called and properly posted meeting of the Ashburnham Planning Board held on December 13, 2007, it was voted to approve with conditions the Site Plan Review application of GFA Federal Credit Union, of 229 Parker Street, Gardner MA 01440 under Section 5.10 of the Ashburnham Zoning By-laws, originally submitted to the Planning Board on October 16, 2007.

I. Proposal

GFA Federal Credit Union (the "Applicant"), represented by Gregg Rosen of NES Group, 905 South Main Street, Building B, Suite 201, Mansfield, MA 02048, submitted an application for a Site Plan Review to construct a new 3,134 square-foot two-story building for a new GFA Federal Credit Union branch that would replace an existing two-story apartment house building, known as the Charles Wilder Whitney house (the "Project"), located on property at 35 Main Street. The parcel identified as Map 62 Parcel 126 on the Ashburnham Assessors' Maps. The Owner of the property is The Wright-Martin Realty Trust and the Applicant has a Purchase and Sales agreement (P&S) with the Owner.

The Project proposal is shown on the "Site Plan prepared for GFA Federal Credit Union, Ashburnham, MA. Prepared by Edmond J. Boucher, PLS, October 12, 2007, with revision dates of on 11-12-2007, 11-26-2007 and 12-3-2007 ('Site Plan') and "Proposed Floor Plan and Proposed Exterior Elevation, Sheets A-1 and A-2, GFA Federal Credit Union, 35 Main Street, Ashburnham, MA, prepared by DRL Associates, Inc. Architects, 2 West Street, Suite G, Weymouth, MA 02190-1961 and NES Group, 905 South Main Street, Building B, Suite 201, Mansfield, MA 02048, October 12, 2007 ('Building Plans')." The Project proposal also includes a Sign Plan indicating the GFA Federal Credit Union "Building Sign" and "Freestanding Sign", received by the Planning Board, October 16, 2007 and "Proposed Front

Elevation, GFA Federal Credit Union, Ashburnham, Massachusetts, Prepared by DRL Architects and NES Group,” received by the Planning Board, October 16, 2007.

II. Jurisdiction

The application was made and this decision is issued by the Ashburnham Planning Board, pursuant to Section 5.10 of the Ashburnham Zoning Bylaw, as it existed on December 13, 2007, the date on which this Site Plan Review was approved by the Ashburnham Planning Board. Where reference is made herein to the Ashburnham Zoning By-Law, it shall refer to the provisions thereof as they existed on said date.

III. Findings

1. The proposed use of 35 Main Street (Map 62 Parcel 126) by GFA Federal Credit Union for a 3,134 square-foot two-story building is considered a Major Site Plan Review for purposes of Zoning, as specified in Section 5.101(B)(4) of the Ashburnham Zoning Bylaw. Under Section 5.102, “No Building Permit or Certificate of Occupancy shall be issued by the Building Inspector until written approval of the Site Plan has been issued by the Planning Board, or unless 60 days laps from the date of the site plan without action by the Planning Board.” The Planning Board’s decision was issued within 60 days after submittal of the Site Plan Review Application. The Planning Board finds this Application was a Major Site Plan Review due to the square footage of the GFA Federal Credit Union Branch building equaling 3,314 square feet, which is greater than 2,000 square feet.
2. Based on review of this Site Plan Review Application, the Planning Board, per the authority granted to the Planning Board in Section 5.106(A) of the Ashburnham Zoning Bylaw, voted 5 to 0 authorizing the following Waivers of Technical Compliance:
 - a) Section 5.105(A)(1) Site Layout. The Planning Board agrees to waive the requirement to show existing buildings within 1,000 feet on the required Locus Plan (Sheet 1) given that the existing buildings located on the abutting parcels at 33 Main Street and 41 Main Street are indicated on the site plan site layout (Sheet 2).
 - b) Also, under Section 5.105(A)(1) the Planning Board agrees to waive requirement of the identification of areas of snow storage after plowing. This Waiver is based on information provided in a letter submitted by the existing owner of 35 Main Street (Wright-Martin Realty Trust), which also owns the abutting property at 41 Main Street, and in a letter received by the Planning Board indicate that Richard Wright, Trustee of the Wright-Martin Realty Trust currently contracts with a private contractor to plow snow from 35 and 41 Main Street, who “is familiar with the lots and where the snow is to be pushed.” A Condition to allow for a review of adequacy of snow removal at 35 Main Street and at 41 Main Street has been added to the Board’s Site Plan Review decision.
 - c) Section 5.105(A)(2) Topography and Drainage Plan. The Applicant requested a Waiver for this Plan requirement with the Site Plan Review Application, stating “all topography and drainage is existing.” Although the DPW Director did not provide any comments to the Planning Board, per Section 5.103 of the Ashburnham Zoning Bylaw, the Planning Board approves this Waiver, subject to the Applicant confirming that the DPW Director does indeed not want any additional drainage structures/provisions for 35 Main Street. This Condition has been added to the Board’s Site Plan Review decision.

d) Section 5.105(A)(3) Utility and Public Safety Plan, The Applicant requested a Waiver for this Plan requirement with the Site Plan Review Application, stating “all utility and public safety is existing on site. Parking and traffic to be located in the same areas and travel the same entrance and exits.” The Applicant did not include location of any facilities for refuse on the site plans and has submitted a letter from Mr. Wright indicating. “the tenants currently at 35 Main Street and the Video Store share the dumpster with the Ashburnham Hardware Store.” Richard Wright, Trustee for the Wright-Martin Realty Trust, has agreed to allow GFA to share the cost of the dumpster with the Hardware Store. The Planning Board agreed to the provision of a shared dumpster between GFA and the True Value Hardware Store, and Planning Board agreed to waive the provision of show any facilities for refuse at 35 Main Street.

e) Section 5.105(F) requirement for drainage calculations. The Applicant requested a Waiver for this Plan requirement with the Site Plan Review Application, stating “all drainage is existing.” As noted under the waiver for Section 5.105(A)(2), the Planning Board grants this waiver subject to confirmation from the DPW Director that indeed no additional drainage measures are required for 35 Main Street. As discussed under the waiver for Section 5.105(A)(2), a Condition to this Site Plan Review decision has been added to ensure that DPW Director provides a final drainage review before the issuance of any Building Permit.

f) Section 5.107.2(B), the Planning Board agrees to Waive the requirement that the off-street parking area be screened from the adjacent properties given the site is already developed and with parking spaces required to service the Bank and Video Store Building, the Applicant will not be able to obtain full compliance with the 10-foot side setback of the Village Center Zoning District. The Applicant has indicated where landscaping will be provided on the Site Plan including the grass area in front of the Spartan Video Store, and a Condition has been added to this Site Plan Review decision ensuring that a Landscape Plan is submitted prior to issuance of a Building Permit.

g) Section 5.107.3, Landscaping Requirements. The Planning Board finds that given the site is already developed, the Applicant is not able to meet the requirements within Table A of the Site Plan Review Zoning Bylaw for: a) Percent of total automobile parking area and circulation area to be landscaped equaling 4% and b) Width of buffer for abutting residential uses and/or districts equaling 5 feet. The Applicant has provided information to the Planning Board, as indicated on the Site Plan, that including the grass area in front of the Spartan Video Store, there will be 3,400 square feet of landscaped areas, which is 36% of the total area of parking and circulation areas. In addition, as noted the Waiver granted under Section 5.107.2(B), a condition ensuring that a Landscape Plan is submitted prior to the Building Permit has been added to the Site Plan Review decision. The requirement for the 5-foot buffer to abutting residential uses can be used to address fence buffering Robert J. & Deborah L. Gagne’s property. The Planning Board and GFA needs to review Richard Wright’s Site Plan Review decision for the 90-seat restaurant, as the decision had requirements for landscaping in the area in question between 35 Main Street property and the Gagne’s. That same decision also showed access to parking spaces located on the Ames Avenue lot owned by Nichol Martin, with the driveway access passing through the southwest portion of the 35 Main Street property.

3. The Applicant’s proposed 3,134 GFA Federal Credit Union with a total of 8 eight maximum employees generates an off-street parking requirement of 20 parking spaces under Section 5.32 of the Ashburnham Zoning Bylaw. The 20-space requirement is based on a combination of Section 5.32(k) and Section 5.32(i). Section 5.32(k) is a specific requirement for banks and breaks down the parking space requirement based on whether the interior space is utilized for a customer service area or not. The Planning Board has determined that 1,300 square feet is to be

devoted to customer service areas. The customer service area requirement is for 1 space for every 150 square feet, which equals 9 parking spaces. The remaining square footage equals 1,834 square feet. The requirement for space not devoted to customer service area is 1 space for every 250 square feet, which equals 7 parking spaces. Section 5.32(i) requires one (1) space for every two employees and with a total of eight maximum employees, this requirement would total 4 parking spaces. Therefore, as indicated above, the total parking space requirement for the GFA Bank would be 20 parking spaces.

The Applicant proposes to provide a total of 14 parking spaces at 35 Main Street and has requested a waiver in the total of number of parking spaces and requested use of shared parking between the GFA Federal Credit Union, the Spartan Video Store and the True Value Hardware Store. The Planning Board, based on authority granted to the Board under Section 5.34 of the Ashburnham Zoning Bylaw, after carefully reviewing the GFA Federal Credit Union Site Plan Review Application and GFA's requests, votes 5 to 0 to waive the provision of six (6) of the required parking spaces. This Waiver is justified by the following findings of fact:

- a) The second floor of the GFA building contains 894 square feet. This second story was only added by GFA given concerns of replacing the existing two-story apartment house with a single-story structure that would be out of character with the surrounding structures on Main Street. Therefore given this special circumstance, the Planning Board waives the 4 parking spaces required for the second-story of the GFA Building. This Waiver reduces the requirement of GFA to provide 16 parking spaces, two more than GFA is currently proposing at 35 Main Street.
- b) The existing Spartan Video Store, which was subject to a Site Plan Review approval by the Planning Board on August 12, 2004, had a parking space requirement of six (6) parking spaces. The Planning Board hereby agrees to allow those six parking spaces to become shared parking spaces with the GFA and the True Value Hardware Store. This shared parking arrangement is based on the fact that the Video Store hours and the bank hours will have staggered hours (Video Store is open 12pm-8pm weekdays and 12pm-9pm weekends, which are later business hours than the GFA Bank.). In addition, the True Value Hardware Store was approved with a total of 53 parking spaces. When the Planning Board granted Site Plan Review approval for the True Value Hardware Store on November 17, 2005, the Board's opinion was that the 53 parking spaces were excessive given the proposed Hardware Store use. Subsequent research by the Town Planner has indicated that the Ashburnham Zoning Bylaw requires more parking than good planning practices recommend, especially in the setting of Ashburnham Village Center. Any parking requirements of more than one (1) parking space per 300 square feet of building spaces leads to a situation where there will be more asphalt than building, a development pattern that in the Planning Board's opinion is out of keeping the traditional pattern of the Ashburnham Village Center. In addition, since opening of the 4,200 square-foot True Value Hardware Store addition, the Planning Board has not seen full usage of the 53 parking spaces.
- c) The Applicant, as specified in Item #44 of the Purchase and Sales Agreement with the Wright-Martin Realty Trust, have agreed to have shared driveway and parking and utility easements between 35 Main Street and 41 Main Street. The Planning Board has not seen the easement language to date and a Condition to allow for this easement language be submitted to the Planning Board and recorded with the Worcester North Registry of Deeds prior to issuance of the Building Permit has been added to this Decision. This

easement document may have to address shared driveway access for restaurant parking on the Ames Avenue property.

- d) Given that the Planning Board has not seen full usage of the 53 Parking Spaces dedicated for the True Value Hardware store, as part of the shared parking requirement between True Value Hardware Store, GFA and Spartan Video Store, the Planning Board finds there to be available space for GFA and Spartan Video Store employees, as part of the Shared Parking arrangement, to park within 5 parking spaces to be identified at the rear of the Hardware Store (furthest away from the building) and signed as “Employee Spaces” for the four (4) required GFA employee parking spaces and the one (1) required Spartan Video Store employee parking space.
4. Input has been received from the Fire Department, Historical Commission and the Building Inspector. The Board of Health and Conservation Commission responded that they did not have any comments. No comments were received from the DPW Director, Water/Sewer Commissioners, Light Department, or the Police Chief.
5. Section 7.1 and Section 7.2 of the Ashburnham Planning Board Rules and Regulations (Ashburnham Village Center Design Principles) were reviewed for consistency of existing surroundings. The Board hereby finds that the plans presented generally seem to meet most of the recommendations of the above sections. However, to ensure that four (4) of the design principles and standards are met, the Board has added a Condition to the Site Plan Review decision to ensure full compliance. The design principles and standards that require this condition are: Section 7.10, Section 7.11, Section 7.12, and Section 7.28. These design guidelines focus on building materials and design. The Planning Board finds that the proposed design would meet the guidelines, except the submitted building plans are absent on building materials. Hence, a Condition on the Site Plan Review Approval has been included regarding use of building materials.
6. In conformance with the purpose section of the Ashburnham Zoning Bylaw (Section 1.1), the purpose section of the Site Plan Review Zoning Bylaw (Section 5.101) and the General Review Objectives of the Site Plan Review Zoning Bylaw (Section 5.107.1) the Planning Board finds that the proposal, subject to implementation of Conditions outlined in Section IV of this Approval Decision, will not adversely affect health, safety and general welfare of the inhabitants of the Town of Ashburnham, does not significantly increase the danger of fire and congestion, will not significantly decrease surface and groundwater resources of the Town and the region, will not have significant impact on the natural resources of Ashburnham, is designed to minimize temporary and permanent contamination of the environment and will not otherwise be detrimental to the Town or the area.

IV. Conditions

1. Construction of this “Project” at 35 Main Street shall be done only in conformance with the submitted Site Plan, and as further Conditioned below. Any further modification to the Site Plan shall be subject to review and approval by the Ashburnham Planning Board.
2. The Applicant’s Site Plan Review Approval is for construction of a 3,134 square-foot two-story building. Any modifications to the size and the design building shall require a review by the Planning Board and a Modification to this Site Plan Review Approval.

3. The Applicant is required to obtain a Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals for the Drive-Up Window use, per Section 3.24(o) of the Ashburnham Zoning Bylaw. Per Section 5.102(B) and (C), the Applicant shall either have the ZBA incorporate all of the Conditions of this Site Plan Review Approval, as specified in this Section IV of the GFA Federal Credit Union Site Plan Review (2007-08), or if the Zoning Board of Appeals approves a Special Permit for the Drive-Up use before issuance of this Site Plan Review approval, their language shall include the following within the Special Permit Decision: “the work described herein requires the approval of a site plan by the Planning Board pursuant to Section 5.10 of the Ashburnham Zoning Bylaw.”
4. The Applicant is also required to obtain Variance relief for the construction of the Drive-Up Canopy, which under the current Site Plans is proposed to have a portion of the Canopy structure/overhang be located 2.3 +/- feet within the 10-foot side yard setback requirement of the Village Center Zoning District, and also to allow the property at 35 Main Street to contain two principle structures (the GFA Bank Branch Building and the Spartan Video Store).
5. In order to have the Applicant meet Sections 7.10 Section 7.11, Section 7.12, and Section 7.28 of the Planning Board Rules and Regulations, the Applicant shall not use vinyl as a building material for the clapboard siding. The Planning Board does approve use of a composite material, such as hardy plank, if the Applicant does not use wood. The Applicant agrees to use Asphalt shingles for the roof.
6. The Applicant has indicated where outdoor floodlights are proposed on Sheet 2 of the Site Plan. Before issuance of a Building Permit, the Applicant shall submit a Lighting Plan to the Planning Board showing that none of the proposed outdoor lighting will be spilling over onto any of the abutting properties. The lighting plan shall show the proposed outdoor lighting as measured in lumens or footcandles.
7. The Planning Board voted to waive requirement of identification of areas of snow storage after plowing. This waiver is Condition upon review of the Planning Board to ensure adequacy of the snow removal agreement proposed between the Applicant and Richard A. Wright, Trustee, Wright-Martin Realty Trust, who is the owner of the abutting True Value Hardware Store property at 41 Main Street. The Planning Board shall review snow removal practices on 35 Main Street and 41 Main Street after three (3) snowfalls that are over 6” in nature. Also the Planning Board will conduct a site visit on or before March 1, 2008 to assess the snow removal practices at the end of the winter snow season. If at any time the Applicant decides to handle snow removal for just the 35 Main Street property, they shall submit their plans for snow storage for review and approval by the Planning Board.
8. The Planning Board voted to waive requirements for submissions of a drainage plan and drainage calculations. The Planning Board conditions this approval by having the Applicant ensure from the DPW Director that no additional drainage measures are required at 35 Main Street.
9. A Landscaping Plan, based on areas to be landscaped as indicated on Sheet 2 of the Site Plan, shall be submitted by the Applicant before issuance of a Building Permit. The Landscape Plan shall indicate the specific types and amounts of plants/trees/shrubs. Such landscaping shall be installed prior to the issuance of a Final Occupancy Permit. The Landscape Plan shall conform to the requirements of Section 4.37 and Section 5.102(B) of the Ashburnham Zoning Bylaws, unless such requirements have been waived by the Planning Board under Section III of this Site Plan Review decision.

10. The Applicant shall provide the Driveway and Parking and Utility Easement language between the Applicant and Richard Wright Family Trust, Such Easement language shall be recorded with the Worcester Northern District Registry of Deeds prior to issuance of a Building Permit.
11. Richard Wright Family Trust shall install signs for (5) parking spaces at the rear portion of the Hardware Store property, indicating that these five parking spaces are to be "Employee Spaces" for use of the GFA and Spartan Video Store employees.
12. The Applicant shall work with the Wright-Martin Realty Trust and the United States Postal Service (USPS) to relocate the existing USPS mailboxes located on 35 Main Street off of 35 Main Street.
13. Any further change in the use and/or occupancy of the building will require additional Site Plan Review and Approval, as required by the Ashburnham Zoning By-laws.
14. This Approval only satisfies the Site Plan Review requirements and is not intended to supercede any/all statutory Town By-laws or Rules and Regulations currently in existence not specifically mentioned above.

Vote: 5 to 0 Affirmative:

For the Ashburnham Planning Board,

John MacMillan
Chairman, Ashburnham Planning Board

Cc: Gregg Rosen, NES Group
Tina Sbrega, GFA Federal Credit Union
Zoning Board of Appeals
Building Inspector
Historical Commission
Town Planner
DPW Director
File